

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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2018 LOWER COOK INLET SALMON FISHERY OUTLOOK

General Information

This outlook is provided to assist the commercial salmon industry in planning for the 2018 season in the Lower Cook Inlet (LCI) Management Area. Preseason forecasts and recent 5-year commercial common property harvest averages are the basis for the information provided. Forecasts for LCI can be found on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) web site:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#forecasts>

Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) manages the Trail Lakes Hatchery (TLH), Port Graham Hatchery (PGH), and Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (TBLH). Hatchery forecasts can be found by contacting CIAA directly or through the CIAA web site:

<http://www.ciaa.net.org>

Inseason modifications to harvest projections, season opening dates, and strategies for weekly fishing periods may occur as fisheries develop.

The forecasts for commercial common property fishery (CCPF) harvests by species are summarized in Table 1. The wild stock pink salmon forecast was derived from a 2-year running average harvest model based on log-transformed historical even-year harvests (1960–2016), whereas projections for other wild stock species were based on the recent 5-year average commercial harvest. Projected runs of hatchery-origin salmon were provided by CIAA. These projections of hatchery and wild stock runs will provide the basis for early-season management in all districts, with other management tools such as aerial survey estimates, weir counts, remote video monitoring and anticipated run strength used as the season progresses.

Management of LCI commercial salmon fisheries is based in the Homer area office. Fishery announcements from the Homer ADF&G office will routinely occur on Fridays at 2:00 p.m., or earlier if possible. Announcement recordings will be available for commercial fisheries at 907-235-7307. Emergency order announcement information is also transmitted by email to all registered processors, local radio stations, news media and interested members of the public. Harvest information and fisheries announcements are located on the ADF&G web site:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon>

In addition, interested individuals may sign up to receive email announcements:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

The first announcement is anticipated to be released at 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 27.

CIAA anticipates a total of 367,700 hatchery-produced sockeye and 1.9 million pink salmon to return to LCI release sites in 2018, valued at 4.5 million dollars, excluding broodstock. CIAA anticipates harvesting 2.7 million dollars of hatchery-produced salmon with the remainder available to commercial common property fisheries. The overall commercial common property harvest from Lower Cook Inlet is anticipated to be 519,600 salmon, of which, 31.9% are anticipated to be of hatchery origin harvested from SHAs. Additional hatchery-origin fish are harvested with wild fish outside of SHAs (Table 1).

Set Gillnet Fishery

The **Southern District** is anticipated to open for the 2018 season on Friday, June 1 at 6:00 a.m. for a 24-hour period. Following periods will likely be 48-hours in length beginning at 6:00 a.m. on Monday and Thursday, as specified in regulation. Harvests for 2018 are anticipated to be similar to the historic average. The 5-year average harvest for this area and gear are 500 Chinook, 3,400 coho and 5,900 chum salmon. The 5-year commercial harvest average for wild sockeye salmon is 32,700 fish. The department's preliminary pink salmon forecast estimated a harvestable surplus of 4,000 fish from the Southern District. The Port Graham Subdistrict is anticipated to open to commercial set gillnet harvest on June 1 and remain on a schedule concurrent with other areas in the Southern District for this gear. Fishing time in the Port Graham Subdistrict will be closely linked to escapement levels in English Bay and Port Graham rivers. Management priority will be to provide for subsistence needs (4,800–7,200 salmon). Further information regarding previous years' hatchery releases and commercial harvests may be found in Annual Management Reports for this area at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#management>

Purse Seine Fishery

Portions of the **Southern District** are anticipated to open to purse seine harvest in mid-June, coinciding with enhanced runs to Leisure and Hazel lakes. Historically, this run peaks from July 15–21 (week 29). CIAA anticipates a return of 39,500 sockeye salmon to Leisure and Hazel lakes combined, as well as 79,300 sockeye salmon to Tutka Bay.

Commercial fishing time after mid-July will be correlated to pink salmon escapement at Humpy Creek, Seldovia Bay, Port Graham and other locations in this district. A total of 1.9 million hatchery-produced pink salmon are anticipated to return to release sites in the Southern District.

Hatchery sockeye salmon runs to the **Eastern District** are forecasted by CIAA to be 200,000 fish. Of those, 52,500 may be available for commercial common property harvest with the balance required for cost recovery and broodstock purposes. Wild stock harvest opportunity in the Eastern District will be linked to aerial survey observations of wild sockeye and pink salmon escapements to Aialik Lake and other spawning systems in this district. In addition, surveys of chum salmon systems in Resurrection Bay and Day Harbor will be flown, weather and time permitting.

Portions of the **Outer District** may open to commercial harvest in mid-July focusing on sockeye salmon runs to McCarty Fjord lakes. In recent years, escapement to these systems has been monitored by aerial survey (Delight, Desire, and Delusion lakes). Sockeye salmon escapement into Delight Lake may be monitored using a weir in 2018. In addition, waters in the western portion of this district may be open by mid-July, focusing on pink and chum salmon runs to Port Dick, as

well as Windy and Rocky bays. There are numerous other smaller systems in the Nuka Passage area that are also monitored for chum and pink salmon. In the far west end of this district, systems with the latest run timing: Dogfish Bay, Chugach Bay and Port Chatham will be evaluated for chum and pink salmon harvest potential from August to early September. The previous 5-year average harvest for this district is 5,100 sockeye and 83,800 chum salmon. The department forecasts a harvestable surplus of 95,800 pink salmon from this district. The two most recent pink salmon even-year harvests for this district in 2014 and 2016 were 164,000 and 5,369 fish.

Portions of the **Kamishak Bay District** typically open by regulation to commercial harvest on June 1. Previous 5-year average harvests for this district (excluding the Kirschner Subdistrict) were 38,500 sockeye and 10,500 chum salmon, with the majority of the sockeye salmon harvest attributed to Chenik Lake runs and the chum salmon harvest spread throughout the district. Chenik Lagoon is anticipated to open in mid-June and remain open throughout the season. Last year 97,500 sockeye salmon were harvested from the Chenik area. Commercial harvest of pink salmon from this district is anticipated to be 7,200 fish. Hatchery-released sockeye salmon to the Kirschner Lake outfall remote release site are anticipated to be 44,600 fish, all of which will likely be required for hatchery cost recovery. The department tracks salmon escapement in this district using remote video monitoring sites at Chenik and Mikfik lakes, as well as regular aerial survey observations of index streams.

Table 1.—Projected commercial common property harvests and hatchery runs for Lower Cook Inlet, 2018.

SOCKEYE SALMON				Total anticipated harvest =	226,500
Natural stocks, (5-yr average commercial harvest)					
Southern District, (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)					31,400
Southern District, (set gillnet)					32,700
Eastern District, (Aialik Bay)					0
Outer District					5,100
Kamishak Bay District, (excluding Kirschner Lake Subdistrict)					38,500
					Commercial common property harvest
Sockeye salmon hatchery programs^a	Hatchery return	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest		
Resurrection Bay	199,727	12,750	134,500	52,500	
China Poot and Hazel lakes	39,483	1,000	18,200	20,300	
Tutka Bay Lagoon	79,256	6,330	31,600	41,300	
Kirschner Lake	44,600	1,500	43,100	0	
Port Graham Bay	0	0	0	0	
English Bay Lakes	4,650	0	0	4,700	
PINK SALMON, ADF&G Preliminary Pink Salmon Forecast^b				Total anticipated harvest =	186,700
Southern District (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)					33,000
Southern District (set gillnet, excluding hatchery SHAs)					4,000
Eastern District					0
Outer District					95,800
Kamishak Bay District					7,200
					Commercial common property harvest
Pink salmon hatchery programs^a	Hatchery return	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest		
Tutka Bay Lagoon	1,735,853	300,000	1,402,000	33,900	
Port Graham Bay	181,794	90,000	79,000	12,800	
CHUM SALMON - 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	101,400
Southern District (purse seine)					1,100
Southern District (set gillnet)					5,900
Eastern District					120
Outer District					83,800
Kamishak Bay District					10,500
COHO SALMON - 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	4,400
Southern District (purse seine)					700
Southern District (set gillnet)					3,400
Eastern District					0
Outer District					100
Kamishak Bay District					200
CHINOOK SALMON – 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	600
Southern District (purse seine)					100
Southern District (set gillnet)					500
Eastern District					0
Outer District					0
Kamishak Bay District					0
Total LCI anticipated commercial common property harvest- all salmon species =					519,600

^a Provided by Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, based on parent year releases and recent ocean survival.

^b Available online at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#forecasts>.